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Faith and Science

by HENRY STOB

In this and succeeding articles I shall attempt a discussion of a problem that is agitating the mind of not a few of us nowadays — the problem of the relation that Christian faith sustains to scientific activity.

That such a relation exists is generally acknowledged in Reformed circles, particularly since the time of Abraham Kuyper and his associates. Evidence of this acknowledgment is found not only in innumerable writings issuing from the Reformed Press, but also, quite concretely, in the vast system of Christian schools established by Reformed people both in this country and abroad. These schools, not the least of the schools of higher learning, bear witness to the Reformed conviction that a relation does in fact exist between Belief and Learning, Faith and Reason, Religion and Knowledge, Christianity and science.

* * *

Yet despite this wide and basic agreement among members of the Reformed community, differences come into view whenever an attempt is made to specify more exactly the nature and significance of the acknowledged relation. When such attempts are made questions arise which indicate that it is not entirely clear to us what it is we are saying when we say that Christianity has scientific or noetic implications. The questions that trouble us are of the following sort:

Just what is the role of the Subject or Knower in knowledge; and what is the role of the Object or Thing Known? Is the Christian committed to subjectivism in science? Must the Christian repudiate scientific "objectivity"? Is Grace creative or restorative? Does it bring into being a wholly new creature or does it merely restore an already existing creature, Man, whose essential nature sin did not and can not destroy?

Does regeneration bring with it new and unique powers of perception and inference? Does it provide a new and different logic? Does it demand employment of a special scientific method?

Does faith so influence observation and reflection that the conclusions arrived at by Christians differ in every respect from those arrived at by non-Christians?

Does faith add a new dimension to a body of knowledge which we hold in common with non-Christians, or does it preclude or destroy all commonness?

Is Christian science continuous or discontinuous with non-Christian science? Or do the two overlap? Or are they in conflict at every point?

Does the antithesis permit or does it forbid cooperation between Christians and non-Christians in scientific research?

Can the unbeliever discover truth? Is the unregenerate's mind all darkness, or is there a Light that lighteth every man? Can one who stands in rebellion against God effectually silence the Divine witness in his soul and in the world, and thus be ignorant of God and of his world?

Is there a common or neutral stock of information about the world which any one must embrace regardless of whether he is a Christian or not a Christian, and regardless of who gathered the information?

Such are the questions — and I have given but a sampling — that remain after it has been agreed that Christian faith has a direct and important bearing on the scientific enterprise.

* * *

I do not promise that in the series of articles here contemplated I shall provide a final answer to all these vexing questions. The final answer, I presume, will not be provided by any one of us, but by all of us together after we have entered into extended conversation with each other. The construction

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Faith and Science — Continued

of a Christian Philosophy of Science would seem to require the cooperation of the entire Reformed community.

I shall therefore attempt a smaller, though, I dare say, a not less necessary job. I shall attempt to delineate a single problem, the problem of constructing a Christian science of nature, and in the process consider some of the differences and agreements that exist among us, in the hope that the agreements may be acknowledged and the differences resolved.

Let me begin then by stating a fact that all of us can immediately and directly verify. The statement of this fact will lead us straight into our problem.

* * *

THE FACT is that though all of us recognize Christianity as a total commitment that embraces the whole of life, there are things which, we believe, cannot properly be qualified as Christian. Whereas we do not hesitate to use the term "Christian" to modify some nouns, we refuse to use the term to modify other nouns.

Thus we do not hesitate to qualify education as Christian and to use the term "Christian Education," but we hesitate to speak of "Christian Basketball." The term "Christian Politics" is quite acceptable to us, but we never speak of a "Christian Ballot Box" or of a "Christian Voting Machine." We may speak of "Christian Art," but we do not speak of a "Christian Brush" or of a "Christian Chisel."

The reason for this need not be considered at this juncture. It is enough now to observe the simple fact that we Christians, who are concerned to leave no area of life unclaimed for Christ, nevertheless refuse to speak of certain things as "Christian," and refuse to do so not because these things are in their nature antichristian, but because they are simply neutral entities which cannot bear a religious label of any sort whatever.

We recognize, to be sure, that these things can be used *for* Christ or *against* him, but we also sense that, in themselves, and as such, these things are neither Christian nor antichristian. They simply *are*, being definable in terms of their inherent nature and function, irrespective of who makes, contemplates, or uses them, and to what end.

But now the question comes: Is this also true of certain sciences? Do we make, and are we authorized to make, a distinction among the sciences similar to the distinction we make among other things? Can a man recognize Christianity as a total commitment that embraces the whole of life, and nevertheless believe that certain of the sciences cannot be qualified as Christian? Can the adjective "Christian" be significantly joined to some of the sciences, and less significantly joined, or not joined at all, to others of them? Do some of them stand so close to the central affirmations of the faith that they cannot but take on the color and visage of Christianity; and are some of them, on the other hand, so far removed from these same affirmations as to leave them without any Christian character at all?

To be concrete: Can a formal science or a science of nature be "Christian"? All of us are prepared to acknowledge the existence of a "Christian Theology"; are we equally prepared to say that there is or can be a "Christian Mathematics"? The meaningfulness of the term "Christian Philosophy" we readily concede; but how about "Christian Chemistry"? We are sure that there is a "Christian Ethics"; do we think there is a "Christian Logic"? And what of Linguistics? Is, or can there be, a "Christian Grammar"?

* * *

OUR ANSWER to these questions matters, for these questions are concerned with nothing less than the relation that Christianity bears to our ongoing scientific efforts. The answer we give will disclose how we conceive of that relation, and also how we conceive of Christianity and of Science. In volved in our answer, whatever it be, indeed a whole theology, for even answer will imply some view concern ing the role of faith in knowledge, th range and scope of sin's destructiv power, and the nature and extent grace, both special and common.

There are, as I see it, four answe in the field. I do not dare dogmatical to affirm that they exhaust the poss bilities, though I suspect they do. any case all of them are alive in ou world, and worth our consideration.

In the next issue of the *Journal* shall present the answer of the Dichot mist, who, though committed to a Chri tian view of science, denies that the is or can be a Christian Physics.

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Assumptions

If a man were forced to demonstrate for himself all the truths of which he makes daily use, his task would never end. He would exhaust his strength in preparatory demonstrations without ever advancing beyond them. As, from the shortness of his life, he has not the time, nor, from the limits of his intelligence, the capacity, to act in this way, he is reduced to take on trust a host of facts and opinions which he has not had either the time or the power to verify for himself, but which men of greater ability have found out, or which the crowd adopts. On this groundwork he raises for himself the structure of his thoughts; he is not led to proceed in this manner by choice, but is constrained by the inflexible law of his condition. There is no philosopher in the world so great but that he believes a million things on the faith of other people and accepts a great many more truths than he demonstrates.

—ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE, *Democracy in America*

The Glory of Christ and the Unity of the Church

by HARRY R. BOER

I do not pray for these only, but also for those who are to believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me. —John 17:20-23

THERE IS in the world today a powerful ecumenical striving. I am frank to say that I do not belong to those who see in this phenomenon simply a Modernist effort to unite the Church, or to those who believe it is only a counter-action to the unity of Roman Catholicism, or to those who believe that a keen doctrinal awareness might to prevent participation in it. Undoubtedly many Modernists play a role in it, doubtless many believe that this is a good way to meet Rome, and doubtless many take part in it whose doctrinal sensibilities are far from sharp. The question is whether the ecumenical movement that is today surging through the world-Church is explainable in terms of these factors. It does not seem to me that it is.

I believe that we are concerned here with a movement of the Spirit. When I say "here" I do not refer primarily to the World Council of Churches, although I do not mean to exclude it either. My primary reference is to the ecumenical *spirit* that is abroad. This Spirit manifests itself in large ways and in small ways. It manifests itself in ways that are more pure and less pure. Wherever the Spirit of God manifests Himself through human agencies his manifestation is less than perfect because involved in it is the less than perfect nature of the human instrument. But this does not alter the fact that an imperfect manifestation of the Spirit of God in history is, for all that, a manifestation of the Spirit. And where there is such a manifestation it is our duty to recognize it and to act in accordance with its requirements.

I believe that the ecumenical spirit of our day must be taken seriously because I believe in the *visible* unity and communion of the Church of Christ. I believe that the long held and popular doctrine that the unity of the Church is only or chiefly spiritual is a *bad* doctrine, that is to say, a thoroughly *unscriptural* doctrine. The New Testament gives us to see only *one* Church, and every part of that Church is in communion with every other part of her. The New Testament knows *nothing* of two churches of Christ that are not in communion with each other or that do not recognize each other's ministries or sacraments. Let us not cut asunder what God has joined together, in this instance the spiritual and the visible aspects of the Church. I discussed this point at greater length in an article in the February issue of the *Journal* and I shall not further enter upon it here.

In this article I should like to call attention to the true basis of ecclesiastical unity. *This basis is the glory of Christ.* What is this glory?

The four verses from John quoted at the beginning should be carefully read. I wish to call attention to the following elements:

a. Jesus *prays* that his followers may be one, and he *gives his glory* that they may actually *be* one, *become* one.

b. The purpose of their receiving this unity is that "the world may believe that thou hast sent me." This is explicitly stated *two* times in this crucial passage on the unity of the disciples of Christ.

The glory of Christ, then, effects the unity of the Church, and this unity must act as a powerful missionary weapon in bringing men to confess Christ as the Sent One of the Father. The unity of the Church is not a mere organizational desideratum, it has an intensely spiritual basis and an intensely spiritual purpose. Our chief concern now is with the spiritual basis. What is the glory of Christ that achieves the unity of the Church?

The Glory of the Lord in the Old Testament

IN THE Old Testament the "glory of the Lord" is a powerful conception. It means far more than majesty, honor, splendor. It is so closely associated with the divine being and attributes that it may almost be said to be identical with them. That is to say, in the Old Testament the glory of the Lord is a manifestation of God himself. "Thou canst not see my face, for man shall not see me and live. And Jehovah said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon the rock: and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand until *I* have passed by: and I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see *my back;* but my face shall not be seen," Exodus 33:20-23. To see the glory of the Lord here meant to see the "back" of the Lord, that is, a less intense manifestation of the divine being. In Isaiah 59:19 we read, "So they shall fear the name of Jehovah from the west and his *glory* from the rising of the sun." In this passage the glory of the Lord is an object of worship. The conception reaches its highest expression in other parts of Isaiah in which it is clearly an integral part of Israel's expectation of the last days,

and is directly associated with the universal dissemination of the grace of God. "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made level, and the rough places a plain, and the *glory of the Lord* shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together," 40:4, 5. "For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples, but Jehovah will rise upon thee and his *glory* will be seen upon thee. And nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising," 60:1-3. More illustrations could be given, but these must suffice to show that in the Old Testament the glory of the Lord is intimately associated with the divine being, on the one hand, and with the universal diffusion of the gospel, on the other.

The Glory of Christ in the New Testament

IN THE New Testament the glory of Christ is directly related to him as a *heavenly being.* It is associated in the gospels with Christ's appearance at the end of the age to judge the world. It was revealed when Jesus was transfigured with Moses and Elijah, Luke 9:28-32, and it is the glory on which he entered immediately upon his resurrection from the dead, 24:26. This heavenly character of the glory of Christ is supported by numerous statements in the epistles. Christ's is the glory and the dominion forever, I Peter 4:11, he was received up in glory, I Tim. 3:16, he is the Lord of glory, I Cor. 2:8, God raised him from the dead and gave him glory, I Peter 1:21, his appearing will be in glory, Titus 2:13, I Peter 4:13.

These passages create the impression that the glory of Christ is only the majesty, honor, power and splendor of his heavenly state. These elements certainly are involved in his glory. But a further examination of the expression deepens and enriches our understanding of it. The glory of Christ is indissolubly related to the gift of the Holy Spirit whom Jesus received at his resurrection, and to the idea of the universal proclamation of the gospel. In this connection we cite first of all what John writes in 7:38, 39, "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water. But this he spake of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus *was not yet glorified.*" In the light of these words we must read 12:20 ff. Certain Greeks who had come to attend the feast of the Passover desired to see Jesus. When he was told of this Jesus answered, "The hour is come that *the Son of Man should be glorified.* Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit." The glorification of Christ, therefore, makes the universal preaching of the gospel possible, and this is again dependent upon the Spirit whose work will begin with the glorification of Jesus.

In the writings of Paul the relationship between Christ, the Spirit, and glory is intimate. When we remember his clear teaching that the Spirit of God raised Jesus from the dead, Romans 1:4 and 8:11, an interesting and revealing light is cast on 6:4 where he writes, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead *by the glory of the Father,* even so we also should walk in newness of life." We cannot here investigate all the connections that Paul lays between Christ, Spirit and glory, but we do wish to quote on this point that heavy-to-read but incomparable exegete, Geerhardus Vos:

> In a few other passages the resurrection of Christ is ascribed to the Spirit indirectly, being represented by an act of the power, the glory of God, both of which conceptions are regularly associated with the Spirit, Cf. Rom. 6:4, I Cor. 6:14, II Cor. 13:4. . . . But apart from the resurrection *the glory* is to Paul the specific form in which he conceives of the exalted state of Jesus, and this *glory* is so closely allied to the Spirit in Christ also, as to become almost a synonym for it. (*Biblical and Theological Studies,* by Members of the Faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary, 1912, p. 234)

This glory is now in the Church and finds its expression *in the ministry of the Spirit.* In II Cor. 3:7-11 Paul contrasts it with the *glory of the Lord* in the old dispensation and in the brief space of five verses uses it no less than ten times to demonstrate the superior excellence of the New Testament ministry of the gospel over the Old Testament ministry of Moses. He ends the chapters with these wonderful words, "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror *the glory of the Lord* are transformed into the same image *from glory to glory,* even as *from the Lord the Spirit.*" We think here, too, to mention no more, of the comforting words which Peter speaks to those who suffer as result of faithfulness in Christian stewardship, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ happy are ye, for *the Spirit of glory and of God* resteth upon you," I Peter 4:14.

The Spirit, the Glory, and the Unity of the Church

HOW DOES this glory come into the Church? The glory of Christ is in the Church because *he has given his Spirit to the Church.* It would be hazardous to say that the glory of Christ and the Spirit of Christ are convertible terms. The Bible is not that explicit. But so close is the relationship between Christ's glory and Christ's Spirit that we can see his glory only, exclusively, in the light of the Spirit that was poured out at Pentecost. When Jesus says in John 17:22 "And the glory which thou hast given me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one," he projects himself into the victory time of resurrection and ascension and regards the gift of the Spirit to the Church as an accomplished fact. What else can the glory mean? There is one, *one,* one, factor that effects the unity of the Church of Christ. This factor is the Holy Spirit. There is none other. This is the great teaching of the passage quoted at the beginning of the article.

Now let us be careful not to "spiritualize" this glory out of existence, or interpret it in such a way that it becomes a shadow of what Christ intended it to be. What is the glory of Christ in the church? The glory of Christ in the Church is the Spirit-inspired unity of her members expressing itself *in their common Christian witness, walk and communion.* The glory of Christ in the Church is the Spirit-inspired common witness, wa

and communion of her members expressing itself *in unity*. The unity of the Church is inseparable from *the visible witnessing walk and communion of the Church*. The visible witnessing walk and communion of the Church is inseparable from *her unity*. For this reason the doctrine that the unity of the Church is only or chiefly spiritual, invisible in character is an *unscriptural* doctrine, it is a *bad* doctrine. It seeks to sanction with the authority of Christ the obscuring of his glory in the Church. It seeks to make reasonable the irrationality of historical development, it seeks to make scriptural, or to make less than very sinful, our miserable betrayal of the trust committed to our care to make his glory shine forth in the ordered and united walk, witness and communion of the Church.

No ecclesiastical history, no tradition, no theology, no theological authorities, however revered and honored, no fear of "agonizing reappraisal," may be allowed to stand in the way of this acknowledgement. The Word of the living God is the judge of *all* things. It is the judge of the Church, it is the judge of her theology, it is the judge of her life and of her history. The New Testament knows only *one* Church. It is a Church in which every part is in communion with every other part, in external, visible communion. In ministry, in sacraments, in proclamation, in life. There is in the New Testament no other Church than *this* Church. The New Testament neither knows nor acknowledges the legitimacy of our many churches. It knows only the one, holy, catholic Church of her Lord, Jesus Christ.

Unity and Ecumenicity

WHEN WE so view the unity of the Church we have a norm in hand for judging the present ecumenical striving in the Church. We can have little patience with the obsession to make one denomination out of two in which doctrinal and spiritual considerations play little or no role. It is not *this* kind of unity that the glory of Christ envisages. However inadequate it be to describe the unity of the Church only in terms of the spiritual, the indisputable fact remains that the unity of the Church is *nothing* if it be not rooted in *spiritual unity*. A tree without roots is hardly a tree, just as a tree that has only roots is hardly a tree.

We shall also discover that an ecumenicity which is only Reformed, or only Lutheran, or only Anglican, or only some other denominationalism, and feels that in this striving the ecumenical task is satisfactorily discharged, is not an adequate ecumenicity. Until the various churches that now constitute the world-Church come to a better understanding of each other it is doubtless useful that various sections of it that have a confessional commonness seek greater fellowship among each other. But this is and remains an attenuated ecumenicity so long as it is not accompanied, so long as it is not motivated, by a broader vision of the unity of the Church.

In the third place, we shall not lightly dismiss as "Modernist," "superficial," and "dangerous" the broad ecumenical striving of many unquestionably evangelical Christians. Dare we twist the Evanston Message to mean something other than it obviously presents itself as meaning by ascribing to it an insincerity to lull the orthodox to sleep? Would not American Liberalism gladly have written a different message? And did it not fail in this? Gladly would one have seen a more explicit rejection of the Liberalism that many in the World Council represent. But let us not for that reason reject the work of the Spirit that is evident here.

Finally, the high requirement of the glory of Christ in the Church must, when it is taken with full seriousness, bring us to a sense of our own powerlessness to realize it. I see no present way in which the world-Church can come to a manifestation of visible unity in the spiritual witness, walk and communion of her members. We are powerless to achieve it. But let us not underestimate the power of this powerlessness. God's strength is perfected in weakness. When as a minister of the gospel I read on Sundays the Ten Commandments to the congregation I do not for a moment entertain illusions as to either their or my ability to obey them. I do not for this reason, however, give them an interpretation (a "spiritual" interpretation) whereby I create the impression that, after all, we *do* keep them. No, we confess our *bankruptcy* and cast ourselves on the mercy of Christ. And when we do this a keeping of the law becomes possible that transcends every power of the human spirit unaided by grace.

What God will yet do to make his Church one we do not know. His requirement is plain. Our duty to acknowledge that requirement is also plain. Our duty to realize the requirement is no less plain once the duty of acknowledging it is admitted. Faith must precede action. And surely action ought to follow upon faith.

But this faith and this action must not stand by themselves. Christ is not interested in unity for its own sake. He believes in unity *with a purpose*. This purpose is the ingathering of the Church of Christ. The early Church was *one* Church and it was, as no Church since has been, a *missionary* Church. The ecumenical movement that we know today did not originate in the study of theologians or in animated conferences between Church leaders, but in the agony of need on the *mission field*. Blessed is the Church that knows how to lose her self-created safeties for the sake of being rich in fruits to present to her Lord. Blessed is the Church that will lose the life she herself has made to find the life that Christ has prepared for her. Blessed is the Church that takes her mission fields and the needs of those mission fields *seriously*. She will find that many views and practices can not stand in the light of scripture which these fields reflect upon her.

> "If there is one sole source of everything, there is one sole end of everything; everything through Him, everything for Him. The true religion, then, must teach us to worship Him only, and to love Him only. But as we find ourselves unable to worship what we know not, and to love any other object but ourselves, the religion which instructs us in these duties must instruct us also of this inability, and teach us also the remedies for it. It teaches us that by one man all was lost, and the bond broken between God and us, and that by one man the bond is renewed." — Pascal

What the Pastor Expects of the Physician

by C. WM. FLIETSTRA*

DURING my student days, there were occasions when we were privileged to attend informal lectures on the general theme of the ethical responsibility which a pastor as pastor owed to the medical profession. A wholesome respect for the objectives and principles of the profession was stressed, as well as the proper decorum of the pastor when upon a visit within the hospital room. We were cautioned that one inconsiderate and careless word or action on our part could create psychological barriers as respects the physician's efforts toward his patient. We remembered and respected these pointers which were given. We resolved that when we entered into the ministry we would endeavor to cooperate in every respect with all concerned to foster an amicable liaison in the two professions.

Since I have been in the ministry, I have had occasion to call into question the principles and practices of the medical profession, as these have sometimes directly conflicted with positive standards of morality that I as pastor seek to impress upon the parishioner. In the consideration of such examination, I feel justified that the clergy as representing sacred and unalterable truths can place a challenge before the medical profession. Such a challenge may well call into question the evaluation and application of these moral norms by many medical men.

WHAT, for example, are we to think of a physician who, contrary to the established laws of a given state, sanctions abortive surgery? And yet, just the other day, my paper carried another incident of a certain Mrs. W— who died from complications of abortion! Of course, such a physician realizes that he is defying a legal statute. But what of the sacred ordinance as we seek to impress the same upon our listeners? What is the underlying motive which would prompt such physicians to transgress sacred as well as civil laws?

And then I find certain respected physicians within a given community who may be contacted by those tragic mothers facing the reality of having conceived out of wedlock. Now I am not ready to claim that the physician who encounters such tragedy should immediately refer the patient to her pastor with a recommendation for severe discipline! Jesus Himself did not support such a policy or procedure as he came face to face with this social sin in His day. The accusers, or Pharisees, would have rejoiced in beholding a tongue-lashing on the part of the Christ. But the Lord did not follow this hoped-for technique in dealing with a penitent sinner! Rather, in a loving and compassionate voice he said, "Go, and sin no more!"

On the other hand, as those who must recognize sin as sin, we cannot condone the opposite policy of merely glossing over or camouflaging it! Are we to tolerate a policy of bypassing a breach of moral law in the treatment of such a case? And yet this is just what occurs in some physician's offices. Patients of this category are made to feel that what has transpired is trivial . . . perhaps even normal or natural. They are even told that if questions are raised or suspicions noted on the part of relatives or friends, a *diagnosis in their favor* will be publicized for the satisfaction of all inquisitors. Is this facing reality in harmony with morals? Is this cooperating with the standards and objectives of the clergy? Would it not be much more honorable and considerate to contact the local pastor and that doctor, pastor, and patient have a conference regarding this difficulty? Or even that the physician himself confer with the patient regarding the ethical difficulties which will develop? In this way, the pastor would feel that the attending physician takes into consideration the moral repercussions of the case together with the physiological and psychological treatment.

THEN there is the physician who, on medical suppositions, endorses euthenasia. And with this endorsement he makes bold the claim that if such a practice were universally accepted, the profession would advance rather than be the brunt of public and ecclesiastical suspicion. But, again, does he consider the life of man as existing with responsibility to its Creator? Does he no sense Supreme Sovereignty in God in dealing with the king of His creation? Oh, yes, lest all physicians be condemned, there are still surgeons who will bear testimony in the operating room and in the sick-room that when they envisioned hopelessness, the Almighty God instilled the miracle of recovery into the human organism. But is it not strange that many today will frown upon the institution of capital punishment as an acceptable penal code but will at one and the same time favor the termination of life as it in turn favors the medical hypothesis of scientific progress and advancement? Is this not inconsistent?

And have you noticed in the press of late the great controversy between certain judge Gorman of Illinois and the AMA? What is the central dispute? Whether or not a child conceived by artificial insemination is born out of wedlock! And this courageous judge ruled in the affirmative. And so does the standard as determined by the Decalogue. But what reaction do we find from the medical profession itself? I read that a certain Dr. Sol T. DeLee, a prominent gynecologist on a Chicago staff claims, "This is a blow to the medical profession and *a step backward the progress of medicine.* I think it unfair to the people involved. Many marriages have been saved by creating life in this manner." Another doctor, Dr. Boris Rubenstein remarked, "In view of the large number of children born this way, I think the ruling is *contrary to public policy* to label them as having been born of adulterous unions. Now the inevitable question which comes to my mind is: What, according to Dr. Rubenstein's opinion, is declarative of public policy? And further: Does such public policy over-rule the sacred norm? The editor of one of Chicago's leading newspapers is quoted in an editorial on this subject as say-

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ng, "Moral codes, of course, *are firmly based on human experience.* . . . In heir capacity of moral leaders, the churches have generally expressed uncompromising opposition. While this attitude may not be relaxed . . . we venture to predict that the law will eventually sanction the practice for those *who elect to be the guardian of their own consciences.*" We hope this editor's prediction will not materialize, but we fear that in this age of uncontrolled freedom in morality it possibly could! It will be extremely interesting to witness the outcome of this dispute to see whether the moral standard of the Word of God or the "progress of medicine" conquers!

One might also question the wisdom and propriety of such psychiatric measures as the lobotomy and the topectomy. In these techniques of psychiatry, it is reported that a change of the entire personality pattern of the individual occurs. Perhaps this does constitute medical progress as far as the mentally disabled are concerned, but when one is damaging the personality structure of the human being, there must be a corresponding alteration of the fundamental behavior tendencies as well as emotional characteristics. Is this ethically justifiable? Suppose such a patient would, in God's Providence, recover. What great problems of adjustment would confront him as he assumes his role in the social complex?

Finally, there is also the difficulty of whether or not a family physician relates all the facts in a given illness. Of course, there may be psychological factors which necessitate a relative concealment. Perhaps even a temporary concealment. But if the patient is emotionally mature and especially spiritually mature, why should there be an evasion of facts? And, believe it or not, I have read articles written by the medical profession itself which favor a sincere and realistic discussion with the patient. Would this not be a splendid area of agreement by both pastor and physician?

I should very much welcome from the medical profession their reaction to these physio-ethical difficulties herewith presented. For it is only when we as pastors and physicians can attain to a wholesome balance of understanding between the professions that solutions will ultimately be discovered.

The Temper of the Time

by DIRK JELLEMA

In a preceding article I said that here is ample evidence of a new Zeitgeist in America — a new outlook, a new world-view. We said that this new Zeitgeist has been in formation for some time, and that it is now explicitly defended by roughly one out of three Americans. My purpose now will be to examine some of the ways this new Zeitgeist works itself out, particularly in ideas regarding politics.

The essential ideas of the new outlook can be summed up as follows. First, *the nature of man is basically technological.* Man is distinguished from the animals by his technology. Second, in consequence, *the good society is one with a high standard of living.* And likewise the primary purpose of society is to furnish its members with a high standard of living. Third, *good is defined as that which raises the standard of living or increases emotional security.* And *truth* is likewise defined in such terms: whatever helps raise the standard of living, or gives me increased emotional security is "true" as well as "good."

This new outlook or Zeitgeist is different not only from the medieval-Reformation perspective, which evaluated all things in terms of religion, but also from the liberal-secular-scientific outlook which prevailed roughly from 1650 to 1950, and which evaluated all things in terms of reason or science or freedom.

These assumptions of the new Zeitgeist which is emerging are thus the assumptions or framework within which all things are assessed. *They are the beliefs in relation to which all things are evaluated.*

To make this meaning of Zeitgeist more clear, take a few specific examples. The medieval-Reformation outlook considered capitalism in terms of religion, and thus asked: How can making money help my spiritual life? The new Zeitgeist asks: How can spiritual life help me make money?

The Greek-Renaissance outlook asked how making money or passing a new law, or whatever, would help increase culture: the medieval-Reformation outlook asked how it would help religion: the liberal-secular outlook now disappearing asked how it would increase freedom. The new Zeitgeist asks how it can raise the standard of living.

Thus the student affected by the new Zeitgeist will judge whether a society is advanced or retarded, "good" or "bad," by the standards of this new Zeitgeist. He will ask himself *not* whether the society is cultured or barbarian: *not* whether it is religious or non-religious: *not* whether it is free and rational or tyrannical and irrational: no, the student will ask himself whether it has a high standard of living or not.

Now, this new Zeitgeist brings about some notable effects in the views taken of politics and political life. These effects can be clearly seen in today's students, and indeed more inarticulately in the attitudes of the man on the street.

Let us ask some questions, and see what the answers are according to the new Zeitgeist. And if you think that all this talk of a new Zeitgeist is foolishness, try asking these questions of some of the people you meet: roughly one out of three will, if pressed, give the type of answer that is outlined below, an answer in terms of the axioms and presuppositions of the new Zeitgeist.

Well, consider this question: *Why is democracy the best form of government?* The answer, in terms of the new Zeitgeist, is clear. It is best — not because it is based on religion, not because it is rational or produces the maximum amount of freedom — it is best rather *because it produces a high standard of living.* This attitude has become so noticeable that it permeates much of our propaganda abroad: the "American way of life" is defined in terms of TV sets, cars, and refrigerators, rather than in terms of Valley Forge and the Bill of Rights.

The Temper of the Time — Continued

Hence the curious spectacle our propaganda abroad presents: we say loudly that democracy gives a high standard of living, and the Communists counter that Communism does it three times as quickly. Since the Communists are correct (statism *can* raise the s.o.l. more quickly — at the cost of giving up freedom), *our propaganda plays into the hands of the Communists.*

Let us ask another question. *Is freedom valuable?* In terms of the new Zeitgeist, the answer is clear. *Only insofar as it helps to raise the standard of living or to give me emotional security.* Is the Bill of Rights a basic part of our way of life? No, not really, since it has no direct connection with either of those two things.

Let's continue. Question: Is free speech valuable or basic? Answer: No, and in fact it often disturbs my emotional security, so that it should be redefined as "the right to agree with the group." Question: What does freedom of religion mean? Answer: It means the right to have religious ideas which do not offend the group. Question: Do you vote Republican or Democrat? Answer: It really doesn't make much difference, since they both favor a higher standard of living. I vote the way my group does, since that gives me more emotional security.

Question: Should Negroes be protected against various forms of discrimination? Answer: That question tends to harm my emotional security, so I refuse to consider it seriously except to say it's best to leave things the way they are. Question: What do you think about our foreign policy? Answer: I think the same way my group does, whatever that may be. Question: Don't you feel any personal responsibility? Answer: No. To become too much involved in such a question hurts my emotional security. Anyhow, that's the government's job, not mine. Question: But don't you value the freedom to help determine the government's policy? Answer: No: how does that freedom help me make more money or gain emotional security?

Once again, if you as reader at this point are inclined to disbelief, we repeat: *Ask people these questions,* and see if you don't get this kind of answer from roughly one out of three.

The effects of the new Zeitgeist in political attitudes are admirably illustrated by a recent public opinion poll taken by the Harvard University Sociology Department, and reported in *Look* (April 15, 1955). The answers given by approximately one out of three of the sample show clearly the new mindset which is emerging. We reproduce below some of the key questions and the answers given.

Question: "If a person wanted to make a speech in your community favoring government ownership of all the railroads and big industries, should he be allowed to speak?" This amounts to asking whether a person who disagrees with the group's opinion in economic matters should be allowed to speak. *Thirty-one percent* answered that such a man should not be allowed to speak.

Question: "If a person wanted to make a speech in your community against churches and religion, should he be allowed to speak?" This amounts to asking whether free speech should be given to persons attacking the group's opinion on religious matters. *Sixty per cent* said that such a person should not be allowed to speak.

Question: "Consider a man whose loyalty has been questioned before a Congressional committee, but who swears under oath he has never been a Communist. Should he be allowed to speak in your community?" *Thirty per cent* said that he should not be allowed to speak. Twenty-nine per cent said anything written by such a man should be removed from the public library ("freedom of the press"). Twenty-eight per cent said such a man should be fired if he was working in a defense plant.

Despite the complacency with which these conclusions were given in *Look,* they seem clearly to tie in with many other evidences of the new Zeitgeist. If freedom is valuable to roughly one out of three only to the extent it helps raise the standard of living, then it is not very valuable: and there is no particular reason for insisting on freedom (except on "freedom" to agree with majority opinion, with the standards of the group).

It is curious that the main reason such people have against Communism is not that it suppresses freedom, and not that it suppresses religion (for it can be shown that this is not true: it rather *controls* religion), but rather that it produces a lower standard of living. Many students thus have no real answer to Communism once the realize that Communism *does* raise th standard of living, and rapidly; tha Communists *do* have an advanced tech nology, and are turning out more eng neering technicians than the USA is that a major part of Communist propa ganda in underdeveloped countries precisely the promise of a high s.o.l., i a hurry. That Communism destroy freedom really means little to suc students, since they have previousl regarded freedom as valuable only i sofar as it helps give them a highe s.o.l. or emotional security — and tha means that freedom isn't really too im portant.

This all ties in with the fact tha *Communism also accepts the basic pre suppositions of the new Zeitgeist,* an often defends its actions in terms o those presuppositions. *If* man is basi ally technological in nature, than follows, they say (and aren't they co rect?) that the basic purpose of societ is to produce a higher standard of li ing for the majority. And if that so, aren't slave labor camps justifiab if they help raise the standard of li ing for the majority? And isn't worthwhile to destroy freedom if it wi help raise the standard of living? An doesn't "truth" become defined the simply as "anything which helps rai the s.o.l."? And doesn't "good" mea simply "anything which helps rai the s.o.l."? And doesn't the purpo of education become to help raise th standard of living? And doesn't re ligion become something to be tolerate only if it helps the aims of the Com munist state?

As Abraham Kuyper point out, there is an underlying connectio between Liberalism[1] and Socialism both are products of the liberal-secula scientific outlook which ruled rough from 1650 to 1950. And likewis there is a close connection between th new Zeitgeist, the offspring of Liber ism, and Communism, the offspri of Socialism. Both define man

1. Since it is often forgotten, it might stressed again that what Kuyper meant Liberalism implied in the economic fi "laissez-faire" or "free competition." 1 century Liberal economic ideas can be fou today in the Chicago *Tribune.* What K per was saying was that there is an und lying connection between the Chicago *T bune* and Marxism: both are products the 1650-1950 Zeitgeist and its assumptio He warned also that implicit in both va ties of that Zeitgeist there were the seeds Statism and Caesarism.

technological in nature: both define "good" in terms of material welfare.

The new Zeitgeist has no real objection to the loss of freedom, so long as it is accompanied by a high standard of living. Arnold Toynbee, who has also noted the emergence of a new technological outlook as the older liberal-scientific outlook declined, thinks that the similarities between Russia and the USA of the new Zeitgeist will be enough to lessen the tensions separating them. Some of my students (roughly one out of three) will agree to the following statement: We should forget about our arguments with the Communists and concentrate on joint action to promote higher technological development. Kuyper's gloomy vision of a 20th century of Caesarism and materialism may well be realized.

In our final article we wish to consider the role played by religion in the framework of the new Zeitgeist, after making a few remarks about the rather obvious implications of the new outlook for education.

A Theology of Grace-II

by JAMES DAANE

THE main point of my first article was that Van Til defines the nature of grace in the same way that Hoeksema and Schilder define it: *the nature of grace is such that it does not and cannot extend to man as a sinner.*

1. Hoeksema says God only hates the sinner. Hence for the non-elect sinner God has no love or grace. God's grace and love is for the elect alone — not because God elects to love the elect-sinner — but because the elect is *righteous* in Christ.

2. Schilder said God loves man as creature (i.e., man as good) but hates man as sinner.

3. Van Til says God has a common love or grace only for mankind as a generality which by his definition is something other than man as sinner. For man as sinner, for man as reprobate, there is no grace (no gospel offer), but only wrath.

Thus although Hoeksema denies common grace and Schilder and Van Til affirm it, there is no difference in their conceptions of grace. All three are of one mind as regards the basic question of the nature of grace. They differ among themselves only as regards the *object* of grace, i.e., Hoeksema distinguishes simply between the elect man and the non-elect man, Schilder between man as creature and man as sinner, and Van Til between man as generality and man as differentiated sinner. But all these distinctions between the object of grace take place within a mutual agreement that grace does not extend to man as sinner.

* * *

Since grace is only for man as good, it is not surprising that it is impossible to discern a clear line of distinction in Van Til's writings between common and special grace.[1] Yet it is true that at times Van Til clearly indicates that he holds to both common and special grace (he speaks of God's for-the-time-being-attitude and of God's ultimate attitudes toward elect and non-elect). The question therefore arises whether Van Til rejects Hoeksema's belief that God's love and grace extend to the elect *because the elect are righteous.* Does Van Til allow God's grace to extend to the elect *as sinner?* In treating the elect does Van Til break with the idea that grace does not extend to man as sinner?

The answer is in the negative. Van Til contends that God's wrath rests on the sinful elect in the degree that the elect is still sinner in history. As the elect progressively becomes less sinner (more saint) the common wrath in which he shares is in the same measure withdrawn. The elect as sinner is the object of wrath, not of grace.

The extension of God's grace upon the elect follows the same pattern. In the degree that the elect is differentiated out of the generality into an actual elect-saint, in that same degree he is the object, says Van Til, of God's saving love and special grace. When his "condition" has wholly caught up with his "state," when the "old man" is completely gone and the elect is all saint and no more sinner, then he is (for the first time) wholly the object of God's love and grace.

Thus whether we look at the elect or non-elect, whether we look at common or special grace, the situation remains the same: there is no grace for man as sinner. In Van Til — as in Hoeksema and Schilder — wrath is strictly correlative to sin, and grace is strictly correlative to goodness. · Grace extends only to man as good; only wrath extends to man as sinner. Grace and sin never meet.[2]

* * *

IN MY March article I said that the basic issue between Hoeksema and the Synod of 1924 was not merely a difference over the existence or non-existence of common grace. The basic issue concerned the nature of grace itself. When Hoeksema denies that there can be any (kind of) grace for a sinful reprobate, and when Schilder and Van Til say that there is a common grace but deny that it can extend to man as sinner, then the basic problem is not the affirmation or denial of common grace, but the nature of grace itself. That this is true is indicated clearly in Van Til's (and Hoeksema's) conception of that special grace which extends to the elect. If God shows grace and love to the elect because (in Christ) they are righteous (Hoeksema), or if God extends his grace and love to the elect only in the measure that he has actualized his election and sainthood (Van Til), then it is obvious that the nature of special grace is also at stake.

When it is held that common grace is such that it cannot extend to man *as sinner,* then it is time to discuss not the word "common" but the word "grace." Such a common grace is not grace at all. And when the object of special grace is defined as Hoeksema

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1. In the symposium on my book (*Calvin Forum,* April, 1955) Rev. E. Heerema urges that I do not clearly distinguish between Van Til's common grace and special grace. There is truth to this, but Van Til himself does not do so. Where is the sharp distinction in a postion which urges that in sinless time there was a gospel offer of salvation, and that insists that not only special but also common grace is particular grace (*Cf.* Van Til's *Common Grace and Particularism*)?

2. S. J. Ridderbos says that Van Til's contention that common grace is earlier grace means that common grace is earlier than a person's response to it. Exactly! A grace, however, which is only earlier than a sinner's response to it, is not only a grace to which no response can be made, but is a grace which does not extend to man as sinner, is not contemporaneous with the sinner (which accounts of course for the fact that the sinner cannot respond to it!).

and Van Til define it, then it is again time to discuss the nature of special grace. Such a special grace (like Van Til and Schilder's common grace) is not grace at all.

From this point of view it must be said that 1924 Synod's critique of Hoeksema's theology was a superficial one. The critique should have attached itself to a deeper level of Hoeksema's theology, namely to his conception of grace — which is the level at which Van Til's conception of grace is one with and in full agreement with Hoeksema. I make bold to say that the doctrine of common grace will never ride comfortably in the heart and mind of the Christian Reformed Church until this deeper level of the issue is faced. And until it is faced on this level, it will always be possible for an essentially common grace denying Theology and Ethics to find at least a partial acceptance in the Christian Reformed Church. It is no accident that the common grace problem *in its old form* is again becoming a matter of debate! Nor is it an accident that the maintenence of the Three Points of 1924 together with the maintenance of the conception of grace on which it is based (grace to man as sinner) is being greeted *with the same charges that Hoeksema hurled against* 1924: denial of the antithesis, denial of limited atonement, arminianization of special grace, distortion of the doctrine of predestination, incipient liberalism, and the like. Those who desire to maintain the theology of 1924 can expect nothing else so long as the principle of "no grace for man as sinner" is not consciously (though not necessarily officially) repudiated.

* * *

THE strict correlation between wrath and sin, and between grace and righteousness which is held by Hoeksema in a simple form, by Schilder in a more complex form, and by Van Til in a very complex form, is not a biblical correlation. In biblical thought grace can and does extend to man as sinner. This is inherent in the biblical teaching that Christ died for sinners. Not for a righteous man, nor for a good man — but God commended his love toward us in that *while* we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. It was for man as sinner that Christ died. And therein is revealed the grace and love of God — for herein is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and gave his Son as a propitiation for our sins.

In seeking to understand the biblical conception of grace we must begin where the Bible begins. In biblical thought the fundamental distinction is not between elect and reprobate, between believer and unbeliever, but between one Man Jesus Christ the righteous and all other (sinful) men. The loneliness of Christ on Good Friday is proof that unless the seed fall into the ground and die, Jesus Christ shall remain alone.

In biblical thought grace and sin meet in the same moment. Grace meets man as sinner. Grace is neither earlier (Van Til's common grace as earlier grace) than man as sinner, nor is it later (Van Til's ultimate divine attitude of grace) than the elect as sinner. On the contrary, grace is *contemporaneous* with sin. It extends to man in the very moment in which man is a sinner. In Romans Paul makes it a point of special insistence that *where* sin abounded, *there* did grace much more abound.

Is Van Til's Sole Object of Common Grace Real?

THE above indicates my basic theological objection to the theologies of Hoeksema, Schilder, and Van Til. Consideration must now be given to the manner in which Van Til maintains the principle that grace does not extend to man as sinner.

The problem is that of defining the *object* to which grace is allowed to extend. Hoeksema does it in simple manner. The object of grace is the righteous-elect. The sinful-reprobate is not the object of grace. Van Til rejects this as a completely static, non-historical view of the object of grace. Schilder declared that man as creature was the object of grace, but that man as sinner was not an object of grace. Van Til rejected this as abstract thinking. In history there is no object which is man as creature in distinction from man as sinner. Schilder's object of grace is abstract and therefore non-existent.

Van Til then offers his method of defining the object of common grace. We must distinguish between man as a generality and man as an individual. The unindividuated generality is the object of common grace, man as individual is not.

Van Til felt that this is a concrete way of handling the problem for the principle of distinction is derived from the ontological trinity in whom universality and particularity are equally ultimate. Since man is created by this trinitarian God, man in his very nature is also universality and particularity — and both are equally ultimate in defining man. In this manner Van Til obtains mankind as a generality which is said to be the sole object of common grace, and man as individual which is not the object of common grace. Mankind as a generality is defined — in distinction from man as individual) as that which is not-yet-sinful. Thus Van Til maintains the principle that man as sinner is not the object of grace.

It is absolutely necessary to recognize the place which the distinction between man as generality and man as individual occupies in his thought, for it determines what is and what is not the *object* of grace. Because it occupies this decisive part in his thought we must take seriously his insistence that the principle of the ontological trinity is the most basic principle of Christian interpretation in this (and any) problem.

Many of my reviewers give only a passing glance at the concept "mankind as a generality" (and to Van Til's basic principle of interpretation). This is comparable to explaining Einstein without relativity, or Freud without mentioning sex. They seem to be of the impression that Van Til is merely giving us a religious biography of the individual and explain Van Til very simply thus: as the individual becomes more and more self-consciously wicked, God progressively withdraws his grace (an explanation, be it observed, which rests squarely on the principle that for man as sinner there is no grace!) But Van Til on his own explicit avowal is giving us an aspect of a philosophy of history from Adam to the end.

These reviewers are not wholly to blame — though a careful understanding of Van Til would have kept them from this error. For it is true that in his epistemology Van Til allows the individual man to wholly dominate his thought — and at the expense of man as a generality. The reader need only be reminded that in his epistemology the distinction between the individual regenerate and the individual unregenerate consciousness is the all-decisive

distinction. Man as a generality is quite secondary (a violation of the equal ultimacy of universality and particularity!) and only hovers on the fringes of his thought. This accounts for the constant appearance in his epistemology of "*self*-consciousness."

Moreover, this exclusive point of departure in epistemology from the individual explains Van Til's vigorous but quite inconsistent insistence that there is no common, universal human consciousness. To affirm the existence of the latter is viewed as a concession to theological liberalism. This exclusive concern with the individual also throws light on the fact that Van Til speaks in quiet undertones about a common knowledge but in overtones when denying that there is any common knowledge between believer and unbeliever.

In his epistemology man as a generality plays no decisive part — to say nothing of the equally decisive part demanded by the equal ultimacy of his ontological principle. If it did, Van Til instead of denying that there is a common human consciousness, would have to be equally insistent upon the reality of a common, universal human consciousness as upon individual self-consciousness.

Anyone therefore who approaches Van Til's common grace theology *from Van Til's epistemology* is not wholly to blame when he pays scant attention to man as a generality in Van Til's thought. Yet this is fatal for an understanding of Van Til's theology. Why? Because mankind as a generality is in Van Til's thought the sole and exclusive object of common grace.

If mankind as a generality is regarded by Van Til as a real part of man (if it is a real part of Van Til's Anthropology) then the insistence that there is no general human consciousness is wholly unexplainable. But if it is nothing real (and only individual self-consciousnesses are real) then it is clear why Van Til denies the reality of a general human consciousness. But then mankind as a generality — the sole object of common grace — is also nothing real!

Is man as a generality anything real? Let us discover the answer from another approach.

Mankind as a generality, says Van Til, is on the move. In history it progressively differentiates (individuates) itself into individual elect and non-elect. In this process the generality is said to disappear — and common grace with it in the same tempo — until at the end of history there is no generality at all. In my book I have contended that Van Til has defined his man in process existentially. I shall not further present the criticism of existentialism here except to point out that right at this point in Van Til's thought we are confronted with an *ontological* problem — and it is particularly the matter of ontology which concerns the Christian's criticism of existentialism. But here I wish only to urge that if Van Til's mankind as a generality were anything real by virtue of God's creation, then it could not progressively and finally completely disappear. If universality is as equally ultimate and definitive of human nature as particularity, then that half of human nature could not be allowed to disappear!

* * *

Does Van Til's mankind as a generality mean merely that all individuals once existed in Adam and in the processes of history came to exist outside of Adam? Does Van Til mean anything else by this concept than that in history the mode of the existence of the individual changes, i.e., first in and then outside of Adam? Does mankind as a generality simply mean the (changing) mode of individual existences? If this is what Van Til perhaps means, then, it may be asked, is not the generality something real, namely the earlier mode of individual existence?

It is quite plain that the generality cannot be given reality in this way because Van Til's own definition of the generality is that it is the *unindividuated?*

Moreover, if mankind as a generality means simply a mode of (individual) existence, then Van Til's sole object of common grace is merely a mode of existence. And if the object of common grace is merely a mode of existence defined as something distinct from the individual who exists, then the object of common grace is again a pure abstraction.

* * *

Is Van Til's mankind as a generality — his sole object of common grace — anything real? The following considerations — in summary form — demand a negative answer:

1. If it were a real part of humanity as created by God, it could not disappear in the processes of history.
2. If it were real because it is simply individuals under an earlier mode of genuine individual existence, then this generality would mean precisely that the individual elect and non-elect (or believer and unbeliever) do have common ground, common knowledge, a common universal consciousness, as well as common grace, and that the *individual as a sinner* would be the object of God's grace.

Van Til's Basic Principle of Interpretation

Though the matter is weighty, I shall here for the sake of space be brief. Van Til believes that everything is to be explained (though man cannot fully do so and hence is always confronted with mystery) by the principle of the ontological trinity. I for myself believe this principle is of great importance for an understanding of the one-many aspect of human nature. Had Van Til actually employed it for this purpose, then mankind as a generality would have been something equally ultimate with man's individuality and could not be presented as something that disappears. Instead of using it here in his anthropology, he uses it to explain election and reprobation. The trinitarian nature of God is said to be the explanation for the fact that some men believe and some disbelieve, that some are saved and some damned. Because the one God is differentiated as Tri-Personal therefore the one mankind as a generality must be differentiated into the saved and lost!

Van Til never to my knowledge justifies this usage of the ontological trinity, except to say that unless we use this principle in this way no fact will have any meaning. He believes that any attempt to justify this principle would be an arrogant attempt on the part of man to justify God. Which would be true, but it does not remove the necessity of justifying *the manner in which he uses this principle.*

It would seem to be difficult to the point of impossibility to maintain his usage of this principle without doing violence to the nature of God as biblically defined. If the nature of God necessitates sinful differentiation and lost men, how can he honestly disown the charge that God is then the author of sin and that the nature of God is itself sinful?

As Sons of Olivianus - IV

by LEONARD VERDUIN

The present series derives its title, as the reader will recall, from the fact that Caspar Olivianus, co-author of the Heidelberg Catechism, was led, late in his life, to correct the prevailing conception of the Anapabtists. We saw that it was direct contact with the real Anabaptists, rather than the legendary ones, that led him to change his mind. And it has been suggested that it is high time for the spiritual descendants of Olivianus to follow his example in this matter — his descendants in America first of all, in order that they may understand the origin and nature of the Freedoms that have made America great.

In each of the earlier articles we pointed to certain contemporaries who either never fell for the popular vilification of the Anabaptists, or, who out of respect for the facts in the matter tailored the prevailing views. This time we wish to begin with a bit of testimony coming from a quite different source: we wish to listen to testimony issuing from one of the cruelest inquisitors the Catholic Church ever had in its employ.

There was at the time of the rise of Anabaptism a heresy-hunter who because of his unscrupulous methods and his utter callousness to human distress struck terror into the heart of every contemporary who knew himself out of sympathy with the pretensions of the omnibus church. Franz Van der Hulst. This man said, at one of the public denunciations that went before the execution of Anabaptist victims of his wicked piety: "You people conduct yourself very excellently toward all men, in doing to your neighbor all you would have him do to you, in living with each other in peace, in love, and in harmony; all very fine and good. And that you assist each other in your calamity and distress, and, forfeit your lives for each other, are matters likewise altogether good; I have nothing to say against it. And to expel out of your congregation all those who misconduct themselves . . . is something against which I have nothing to say; it is all very well and good. But what does it profit you if you have the life but not the faith? It verily cannot save you!"

Thanks, monster, you who have sent flocks of devout children of God to an awful death, thanks for this testimony! We don't feel at all for your assessment of the value of an outward conformity to your omnibus church but we are grateful for this testimony touching the *lives* of your victims. We would prefer to enter eternity with the good lives of these people to our credit (the more so since it is solemnly testified elsewhere that they confess to all the truths of the Apostles' Creed) than to go before the Judge with an orthodoxy that banished the last trace of compassion and the milk of human kindness out of your soul!

* * *

In this fourth, and last, installment we come to grips with that ancient slur thrown after the Anabaptists, that of "community of goods." It will be recalled that the Belgic Confession speaks of "detesting the Anabaptists and other seditious folk . . . who . . . would introduce community of goods and confound that decency and good order which God has established among men."

This slur also has a long history. It too was an integral part of the opprobrium to which all were exposed who in their thinking broke with the omnibus church. It was inevitable that our Anabaptists would fall heir to all this accumulated opprobrium.

As far back as the Donatist rebellion (that is, as far back as the launching of the omnibus empire-church) any one who rebelled against the monolithicism of the omnibus church was forthwith under suspicion of being inclined to "community of goods." This need surprise no one. As Prof. W. H. C. Frend has pointed out, in his recent study of Donatism (In this Frend follows Martroye, who made the same assertions fifty years ago), the Donatists felt that with the confluence of Church and Empire most of that which is definitive of Christianity had been lost or tragically distorted; and among the things so lost or distorted was "the sense of social justice which had inspired the primitive Christian community." By moving into the house made available by the Emperor, so said the Donatists, the Catholic faction had made its peace with an ethnic conscience (or lack of conscience) touching property and the holding thereof, ever as it made its peace with a long list of customs and usages long practiced in this house.

It is indeed quite apparent that the post-Constantinian conscience touching ownership and the use of property was not significantly different from the pre-Christian conscience. Nor is it without large significance that every wave of "heresy" (as dissent from the omnibus church and from the monolithicism of which it was the expression came to be called) in post-Constantinian time was a protest against "Christendom's" sell-out to ethnic views, also as this relates to *Mein und Dein*. All the eruptions of dissent had their overtones in the area of economics. And the richer the church became, and her henchmen in the secular levels, the more emphatic became the protest, and, the more fierce became the wrath against the dissenter.)[1] And so the church resorted to the techniques, so commonly associated with a person or a group that knows it is being criticized *justly*, of coining smear-items with which to label the "troubler of Israel."

At the end of the first millennium it was already a tell-tale feature of the protest to contend "we hold all things we have in community with all men." And no one has ever used the "trouble of Israel" technique more effectively than did the medieval church as it pounced upon this formula of the "heretic," his assertion that "men hold all that they have in community with all other men." At once "omnes nostram possessionem" (all our possession) was exegeted, with a glance at the Tenth Commandment, to include wives and children. And so the legend was born that "heretics" have their wives as well as their children in common. "Community of goods" and "community of wives" are the warp and the woof of a *single* feature of the dissent; the sources treat these two as *one*. So much so that although our present assignment is to throw light on the specific charge of "community of *goods*" we find it impossible to speak intelligently of the matter unless we treat this charge as part of the larger charge which includes also the accusation of "community of wives."

The medieval mind staked its all on "expert opinion." If Augustine or someone of like stature had said it, then that was all there was to it. And if an endless row of "experts" had defined "heresy" in such a way that "community of goods" was a part of "heresy" then no one, seemingly, felt the need of asking further questions. And so when Anabaptism became *the* heresy, in the 16th Century, men looked at the books to know what these people were like. And there it was unmistakably clear that a "heretic" is one who, among other evil things, is "given to community of goods." It was by this quirk, so characteristically medieval, rather than by observation and empirical evidence, that the Anabaptist fell heir to the slur of "community of goods."

A person conditioned by the medieval world does not need much empirical evidence to make him doubly sure of himself. It was the ill fortune of the Anabaptists to be forced into a pattern of conduct that made them unquestionably guilty of "community of goods, wives and children included." This was the situation. Oftentimes there would be found at the home of a suspect children, and, at times their mothers also, who were not a part of the family unit but who nevertheless lived under the same roof and ate at the same board. This stemmed from the fact that the fathers were often forced to spend most of their time away from home, for safety's sake; their wives too, in many instances. This left the dependents in the care of some relative or brother in the faith. And the inquisitor coming upon such a situation saw in it proof (if any were needed) of "community of goods, of wives and children." A vicious circle indeed — forced because of the slur of "community of goods" to leave your dear ones in the care of another, and, by so doing laying yourself open to the very charge of "community of goods, wives included"!

The best minds of the day fell into the trap of ascribing all the traditional features to the "heretics," of Reformation times. Men in important position glibly ascribed "community of goods, wives included" to dissenting groups for the sole reason that it had always been associated, in men's minds, with dissent. How far this went may be seen from the fact that when Lutheranism was detected in the southern Low Countries, in 1525, the report of "community of goods" was heard simultaneously, so that the States of Holland were driven officially to deny the report. How is it to be explained that nascent Lutheranism was associated with "community of goods"? By a very simple device, a single syllogism, of which the major premise was that "All heretics are given to community of goods" and the minor premise, "These people are heretics"; which warrants the conclusion that "These people are given to community of goods"! Happily the States were able to put the mind of the Regent at rest. Unfortunately the Anabaptists had no such powerful entity to clear their good name!

Yes, the best minds fell into this trap. The archbishop of Mainz, for example, wrote a letter to the great Humanist Erasmus, on January 8, 1528, asking him make his facile pen available in the assault upon the Anabaptists. And the Churchman tells the Humanist by all means not to forget to put in a chapter on the Anabaptist tenet that "All things are held in common, wives, virgins, property." "Heresy" has always included this feature; therefore the proposed book by Erasmus had to have a chapter dealing with it!

Zwingli fell into the trap, and, like a ton of bricks. He wrote, in words of one syllable, that the Anabaptists "have their wives in common, their children likewise." This remark did not come by observation. Zwingli does not present proof for his damning remark; it was enough for him that they who repudiated the medieval monolithicism were, by definition, guilty of these things.

Henry Bullinger, Zwingli's successor, fell into this trap, and, as heavily. Wrote he, without flinching, "The Anabaptists have their wives in common, their children likewise." But he too failed to document his thesis at this point. He probably felt that no documentation was necessary; after all, these Anabaptists had repudiated the omnibus church, and did not that make them committed to "community of goods, wives and children included"?

John Calvin fell into this trap, and, quite as headlong. Wrote he, "We have seen how these frightful people profane marriage by mingling men and women together like brute beasts as their lust leads them." And then, like a faithful son of the Middle Ages, he begins to speak of the Anabaptist addiction to "community of goods." Ardent admirers of Calvin might find some comfort in the fact that Calvin lived and labored mostly in an area where Anabaptism was quite rare — so that he had to depend for his information upon hearsay to a great extent; but the fact that his own wife was the widow of an Anabaptist martyr offsets this comfort — he had her at least to supply what was needed to give him a better insight into Anabaptism as it really was.[3]

* * *

THE ascription of "community of wives" was sheer fiction. To the best of the writer's knowledge no court ever found an Anabaptist actually given to this view or demonstrably guilty of this crime. This is probably the explanation for the interesting and significant fact that this feature of the "community of goods" charge disappears from the record presently, so that in the second decade of Anabaptism even its worst enemies know better than to press this charge. This might also explain the policy of the Belgic Confession to desist from the ascription of "community" as it pertains to wives and children, and, to confine the charge of "community" to "community of *goods*."

We have an agreement with the reader to let the sources do most of the substantiating. He will be looking for a bit of documentation by this time.

Very well. In the *Vergichtbucher* of the city of Strassburg we read that Anabaptists on trial there, even though racked repeatedly to extort from them the confession sought, "refuse to admit that they have their wives in common."

In the trial of Jorg Braun, an Anabaptist, we hear the testimony, "The charge which men seek to lay upon us, namely, that we have our wives in common, is not true; such a practice would be not pious but devilish the rather."[4]

Hans Hartmann of Rotenburg insisted, "But that we have our wives in common and that we share them — such is not the usage among us. There is nothing to this charge."

Jorg Dorsch (although cruelly tortured in an attempt to make him confess that which his torturers, with book in hand, knew he had to confess) insisted to the bitter end "not to have heard of any resistance to the civil rulers nor of any intention to have all possessions, wives and children, in common or in promiscuity."

Leonard Schiemer was instructed by the court that was trying him "how that evil comes of this, also in regard to

holding wives and all things in common, and that men are brought by it to shameful practices and lusts, and, that they give folks to drink out of a little flask of mysterious content, a matter contrary to God, and more such things." (This notion of a heresy-potion administered to converts whereby their souls were forever infused with heresy is also a piece of the legendary figure of "the heretic," one that was bandied about all through the Middle Ages and repeated in all seriousness in comparatively recent times. It took its origin, quite probably, in the, for the monolithic church, distressing phenomenon of "once a heretic, always a heretic" — a feature of the dissent that will surprise no one who believes in the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.) To all this Schiemer replied, "not to know anything about any flask nor of any evil coming of it; for his preaching has been simply the Word of God, of faith, patience, Christian love and fidelity to each other, and, to live according to the commandments of God."[5]

Julius Leuber's body was mangled and stretched so often that he was unable to raise himself up any more; but although his body was broken, his testimony remained unshaken, that "as to community of wives, if anyone should try to teach them that, then he would say that the idea was devil-inspired and not of God." It is small comfort to know that this Inquisition in Protestant version dropped this charge against Leuber; for it condemned him nevertheless, on other counts, counts less fanciful if not less fictitious!

* * *

THE accusation of "community of goods" was indeed hardly less fictitious than was its twin, the accusation of "community of wives." For all right-minded people, for men with whom a solemn testimony, made under extreme torture, has significance (testimony not offset by verifiable evidence) the court proceedings in connection with this "community" charge constituted a shameless and a shameful travesty of justice. With Olivianus, fair-minded men will adjust their attitude toward the victims of it.

A little of documentation at this point also? We hope the patient reader will not tire of it. It was this kind of thing that made Olivianus do a right-about-face, remember.

Fridolinus Meiger, an Anabaptist whom Jakob Kutzen had rebaptized, denied resolutely at his trial "that they sought to have all things in common."

Jorg Dorsch was instructed by the court to say "what the Anabaptist rule or order or general ambition or covenant is." He replied most solemnly that he "knows nothing of any rule or order or covenant which he is supposed to have with the Anabaptists, save only this, that if a poor man who has joined himself to their company comes to another Anabaptist he must be made the recipient of that which he needs — although no man is obliged to give to another what he needs for himself."

The following statement anent the Anabaptist position in regard to "community of goods" was made by one who could speak for the group, Balthasar Hubmaier, who declared in print in 1526 already (so that no one needed to be in the dark as to what Anabaptists really believed in the matter): "I have always and ever spoken of 'community of goods' in the following vein. A man must always be concerned for his fellow man, to the end that the hungry may be fed, the thirsty given to drink, the naked clothed. For, we are verily not lords of our possessions, only administrators and distributors. No one contends that it is permissible to appropriate that which is his neighbor's and make it common — then it were better to leave him the coat over and above the cloak."

Augustin Wurtzlburger said of "community of goods" that "it has this thrust: the company of this sect has the intention not to permit any to beg, but that what some people have over and above their needs is laid together to be used to sustain him" (i.e., the needy one, L.V.). Wurtzlburger added, "He who is able to work, however, and does not do so, but thinks to lean upon this benefit, him they exclude from their ranks and count him a heathen man. I know nothing of any other order, rule, or community touching possessions."

A certain Protestant theologian was asked to have a private interview with some Anabaptist prisoners touching the matter of "community of goods." He gave his findings thus: "They concede that a Christian may have private possessions, may buy and sell; but, that in line with Paul's teachings men are with their possessions to serve the poor and so 'have their possessions as not having them.'"

Felix Manz, who, as will be recalled, was put in a sack and drowned for being an Anabaptist, put the matter thus: "I wish to have the idea of 'community of goods' so understood that a good Christian is duty-bound to contribute of his goods to a brother in need."

His colleague, Blaurock, another spokesman for early Anabaptism, formulated it as follows, "I am not in favor of 'community of goods' except in the sense that he who would be a good Christian must communicate of his goods — otherwise he isn't one."

And finally (for this can't go on endlessly, although it could), listen to Julius Leuber who said, "In regard to 'community of goods' I wish to help my brother, of my own volition and out of brotherly love."

The present writer does not mind saying that "community of goods" so construed and so practiced seems to him a wholly unobjectionable thing. More than that, he is of the opinion that here a conscience anent ownership comes to expression that the contemporary world lacked sadly, a conscience that will have to be ours if we are to have a really effective argument against Marxism of any hue. And even beyond this, he feels that any Christian or group of Christians that have not come through to this conscience have turned a deaf ear to a sizeable slice of the Sacred Scriptures.

It need not be denied that the Peasant Revolt may have been encouraged somewhat by Anabaptist criticism of the idea of *absolute* ownership and the irresponsible holding of property. Without a doubt, the down-trodden peasant could quote such men as Johannes Hut and Tomas Müntzer (whom contemporary Anabaptists however disavowed). But who is prepared to say that the peasants did not have a legitimate complaint? Or, that the reforms for which they marched were not sorely needed? If men had taken to heart the Anabaptist criticism of the economic injustices of their times the world would in all probability never have been plagued with Marxism as it is plagued today. This John Calvin sensed and spoke of in plainest language. The "Christian" Europe had only listened to the men who gave evidence that they had recovered something of the Christian conscience as it pertains to owner-

ship then in all likelihood that same "Christian" Europe would not now be nervously trying to win back to its friendship the vast armies of toilers whose only possession is their *proles*, their offspring, their "breadworms" as they have styled them!

* * *

BUT what of Münster? And, what of the Hutterites? Did not these go far beyond the position so clearly reflected in the testimony quoted above? A word about each of these.

Yes, indeed, at Münster, ill-fated city in Westphalia, the "haves" were made to declare all their holdings of foodstuffs, yield them into a common commissary, and, receive out of it their daily ration. But it must be considered that the city was already in a state of siege and that it was already evident that hunger was going to write the last chapter. I know of no responsible person that would defend the position that to ration food supplies in a time of emergency is wrong — even as I hope that none will rise to defend the idea that under such conditions the hoarding of foodstuffs is morally defensible. No doubt about it, that in the rationing program within Münster glaring injustices manifested themselves, some who were in position to do so saw to it that they got their share and then some. But I have never seen a program of rationing that managed to escape these abuses.

In any event, the "community of goods" resorted to in the starving city of Münster is no cause for detesting the Anabaptists — to borrow the language of the Belgic Confession once more.[6]

And the followers of the Anabaptist Jakob Hutter? What about their practice of "community of goods"?

Of the Hutterite variety of "community of goods" it must be considered that it was always on a completely voluntary basis. No one was ever coerced to it. In the language of a poor chap who was virtually pulled apart in a satanic effort to wring a confession from him, "no one is forced to yield up his possessions into any such community. We have no intention of forcing men to make their possessions common property . . ." We say, if people want to club together, pool their assets and live in the Hutterite version of "community of goods," they are not doing anything reprehensible — as is sufficiently clear from the fact that enlightened lands such as these United States and Canada do not lift a finger against them for it. Surely to live thus does not make the Hutterites detestable. To say that it does is to say that Christ and His disciples carried on in a detestable fashion. One must endorse (and, he should do it with pleasure) the opinion handed down by a group of Protestant theologians of the day, that "to lay their possessions together and to treat them as common, no one being coerced[7]. . . we do not consider reprehensible . . . Nor do we see how we shall assail it successfully with the Scriptures or condemn it." Our pleasure at such sound and sensible, not to say such Scriptural, reasoning on the part of these theologians soon evaporates however when we come to the conclusion: "However it is to be feared that where such a small beginning goes on, allowed and tolerated, it may in time increase and become a greater and a wider liability. Therefore we opine that such a comparatively small and in itself sufficiently punishable intention . . . is to be opposed with proper means and obviated."

* * *

WE find it impossible to detest the Anabaptists for their stand in the matter of "community of goods." More than that, our hearts go out to the man who wrote: "The charge of communistic tendencies among us is false. The kind of 'community of goods' to which my people hold is the kind Moses had in mind when he said: 'If then there be among you a poor man, one of thy brethren, within any of thy gates . . . thou shalt not harden thine heart nor shut thine hand against thy poor brother . . .' Although there is among our people an abnormally large number of dependents, thanks to the persecutions that have left us with many widows and orphans, and, to the confiscations that have greatly diminished our holdings, yet not one of the pious who have joined themselves to us, nor any of the orphaned children, have been left to beg their way . . . This mercy, this love, this community we do indeed teach . . . and, if that is not Christian conduct then we might as well abandon the whole Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . Shame on you, you who have in all these years been unable to effect enough with your Gospel and your Sacraments to remove the needy ones from your streets — even though the Scriptures say plainly that 'whosoever hath of this world's goods and seeth his brother in need and shutteth up his compassion for him, how dwelleth the love of God in him'?"

The man who wrote these words was an early Anabaptist, a fugitive in Protestant lands all his days. When he died, in a far country, his disciples buried him by night in a cabbage patch behind the house in which he had cowered during his last illness. To bury him in daylight would have precipitated a bloody purge!

NOTES

1. The fabulous riches of the church of the Middle Ages may be known from the fact that when Pope John XXII died, in 1334, he was said to be worth 25,000,000 florins! The great medievalist Coulton informs us that at about the same time the ransom asked for the release of King John of France was 800,000 florins, a sum his subjects were unable to raise!

2. The expression "omnem nostram possessionem cum omnibus hominibus in communem habemus" was heard from the lips of "heretics" on trial in Turin in 1030.

3. Calvin wrote that the awful people of whom he is writing had ceased to exist at the time of his writing. For this we may be grateful. He seems not to have given it thought that they were as non-existent in the earlier days as they were at the time of his writing.

4. "Es sei nit die Warheit, das die weiber und die junkfrawen unter inen, wie man inen auflegen wol, gemein sein sollen, dan es wer nit gotlich sunder teufelisch."

5. "Und als ime angezaigt, wi böses daraus kumbt, auch mit weibern und sunst alle ding gmain gehalten, und zu schändlichen sachen und lüsten gebracht, und ausz einem fläschlen, man wusz nit was, leuten zu trünken geben, das wider Gott sei, mit mererem fürgehalten, darauf er dise antwort gab: Er wüsz warlich nicht vom fläschl und bösem, das daraus entstee. Dann er habe nur das Wort Gottes, glauben, geduld, christliche lieb und treue an ein ander zu beweisen und nach Gottes gepoten zu leben geleeret."

6. Our word "detest" derives, of course, from the Belgic Confession, in its Article 36. The French of the original "Nous detestons" has been rendered, too easily, with "We detest." But this is not a good rendering of the French verb. It means to *reject* rather than to *detest.* The translators of 1562 did not think of translating with "Wij verfoeien"; they wrote "Wij verwerpen."

7. The original text of the Belgic Confession was aimed at those only who sought to usher in "community of goods" by fiat, that is, without the consent of the erstwhile owner. It therefore used the verb "mettre." The revisers of 1566 struck out this verb (not for any lexicographal reason; for they let it stand, in its participial form, at the end of the Article, where it is translated with "established") and substituted the verb "introduire," so making *all* agitation for "community of goods," whether with or without the consent of the persons involved, a reprehensible thing. This is one of the many instances where the "improvements" of 1566 are actually the opposite of improvements. (The Gallican Confession employs the word "mettre" to this day. I could subscribe to it.)

An Evaluation of "The Person of Christ," fourth in the series, "Studies in Dogmatics" by Dr. G. C. Berkouwer

THE PERSON OF CHRIST

The importance of Professor Berkouwer's projected "Studies in Dogmatics" become clearer with the publication of each new volume. The present volume is the fourth in the series, with some fifteen more to come. The project as a whole represents one of the most ambitious undertakings in contemporary theology. Its scope approaches the magnitude of the work of Barth and Brunner in Europe and of Ferre' in America. It unquestionably marks this Professor of Systematic Theology in the Free University of Amsterdam as one of the genuinely significant leaders of Christian thought in our day.

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Characteristic of the volume is the careful treatment of the relation of the Old Testament to the New in Christology. The unity of the two as the Scriptures of the Christian faith is unmistakable. That the Old Testament is a book of promise is precisely its Christian character, but the concern to find Christ in it must never violate its historic intent. The extreme of allegorical exegesis is as distorting as that of historicism.

Again, the care with which such important issues as that of the so-called "impersonal humanity" of Christ (anhypostasy) or that of the "incognito theory" of Christ's divinity (as with Barth and Brunner) are treated will be appreciated by every careful student. It is true that some of Berkouwer's discussions, such as that of the historical debate between the Lutherans and Calvinists over the "communication of properties" of the human and the divine to the unity of Christ's person, will strike many a theological speculation at its most sterile level. It must be admitted that the revivals of some of these historical debates suggest a kind of theological literalism that is not content with the mystery of the incarnation. It is as though the paradox of grace (D. M. Baillie's suggestive phrase) as expressed by the New Testament were not enough: "God was in Christ . . ." The answer to such criticism, of course, is that the very variety of interpretations that have arisen in the history of the Church shows that there is really no avoiding of the theological task. The Church will struggle anew in every generation with the question: "Who do you say that I am?"

—E. T. Ramsdell,
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